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any creases or air bubbles, and this must be done quickly, before the paste gets dry. Cover both sides of the panel in the same way, and when all parts are dry size the paper all over in the same way as the cloth was sized, and then it is ready for the pictures.

If the cloth has been well stretched, and the paper properly pasted, the surface of the panel will be quite smooth, and as tight as a drum. Common flour paste is used to put on the pictures with, but before beginning work, it is wise to have a tolerable collection to select from. The colored pictures may be procured at various prices, and in many ways. Some screens have been priced at two or three hundred dollars, from being covered with very expensive pictures; but very good and amusing effects may be obtained with pictures costing much less, if judiciously selected. In arranging the pictures on the screen care must be taken to contrast the colors well, and it is a good plan to cover each panel in a different style. The easiest way of doing so is to put on pictures, without cutting them out, in somewhat regular order, and then to cut out flowers and arrange them round each one as if in a frame. Another mode is to cut out most of the pictures and arrange them in a confused way, part of a picture in one place and part elsewhere—any absurdity of composition is effective; flowers may be added occasionally, but not so frequently as in the first style. Another, and the most artistic, but the most difficult to arrange well, is for each panel to depict a distinct subject, such as spring, summer, autumn, and winter.

For Spring—Bright green trees and turf, birds singing, eggs, nests, crocuses and any other spring flowers; a little love-making, children grouped in various ways, and everything fresh and young.

For Summer—Ripe fruit, brilliant flowers, haymaking, fishing, boating, hot sunny views, and shady retreats, trees in full leaf.

For Autumn—Shooting, hunting, corn fields, reaping, gleaning, hop-picking, live and dead game, autumn-tinted trees, and the seasonable fruit and flowers.

For Winter—Skating and other winter sports, snow scenes enlivened by bits of red from robins, fires, or red cloaks, holly and mistletoe, old people, and everything else marking the end of the year, or of life.

All the subjects must blend well and run into each other, with no distinct outlines, so that they appear as one picture. It would be almost impossible to cut them out exactly to fit, but the overlapping should be as little as possible. To insure the best arrangement of any of the styles it is a good plan to pin the pictures on to the screen in various ways until the desired effect is arrived at; and, in pasting them on, be careful to press them well, and to leave no air bubbles or raised places. Do not put the pictures anywhere within half an inch of the edge of the panel, as that margin is required to put a beading or other ornament as a finish to the screen. When all the pictures are closely pasted on, look over them, and any little deficiencies or defects paint out with a little water-color paint to harmonize with the surrounding parts. It is then ready to be varnished and mounted.

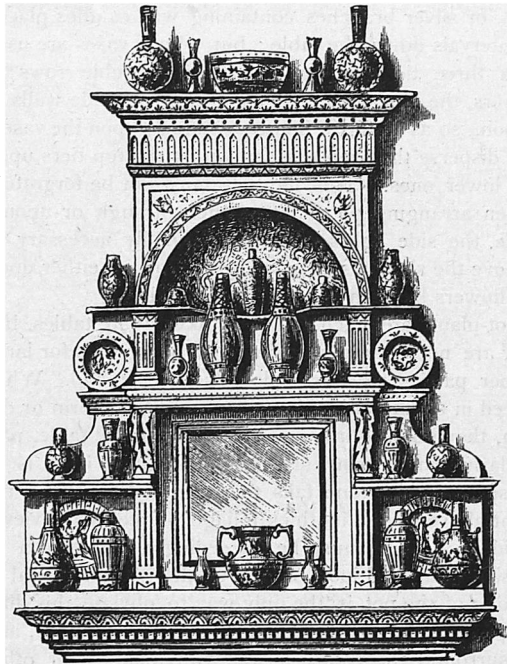
Send the screen to a good house-painter accustomed to varnishing, as it is very difficult for an amateur to do it properly. There are various ways of mounting or rather putting an ornamental finish round the edges of the screen, which may be left to individual taste; but gold beadings, leather in strips put on with ornamental nails, or a beading of wood, japanned, black outside and gold beading within, are all effective. Three pair of hinges must be fixed to each leaf of the screen, and it is finished.

Some screens are not varnished at all, and the colors certainly look softer, unvarnished, but smoke and dirt in time cause injury. Those who do not care to cover both sides of the screen with pictures can put them on one side only, with enamelled cloth on the other.

Screens can be made with less trouble if the panels be covered with glazed colored paper, blue, red, green, or maroon, with flowers or pictures cut out, leaving no margin, and then pasted on separately or in groups, so

as to show a good deal of the colored paper forming the ground.

Some of the newest screens have the centre panel almost double the width of the two side ones, with the bulk of the scraps on the two sides, and the centre one covered with gold paper, and only a few of the best and most effective scraps arranged on it. The gold paper should be stretched tightly or it is apt to shrink. The side panels have a deep border at the base, cut in points



OVERMANTEL IN QUEEN ELIZABETH STYLE.

at the upper edge. Between each point a straight flower, such as a lily with leaves or an iris, is placed on a background of pale blue or green, previously pasted on. The rest of the scraps are arranged, as artistically as possible, up to the top, with a pretty border of flowers or leaves all round the edge. In the centre panel medallions of scraps are arranged on the gold background. The centre medallion is the largest, the four corners next in size, and the intermediate ones



OVERMANTEL IN QUEEN VICTORIA STYLE.

smaller still, and of a different shape. For the four-fold screens, panels of alternate gold and colored background look well, arranging each one with deep points top and bottom, and filling in with scraps. Another idea is a band of stamped gilt leather at the base of the screen then a band of satin, or satin sheeting, of a rich blue, green, or red, and then a second and narrow band of the leather. Above are all the scraps with a strip of gilt leather at the top (and up the sides if re-

quired). Satin sheeting is often used now, to form a dado to standing screens, with a heading of leaves or flowers, which can be had in strips from any of the stores where scraps are sold. The wooden frame of the screen is also often stained the same color as this dado, and left unvarnished.

#### DINNER-TABLE DECORATIONS.

SINCE the attention of artistic people has been directed to the practical application of their knowledge in the embellishment of their rooms and dinner tables in accordance with their own taste, a fuller knowledge of what is beautiful in shape and coloring has arisen, and much of the overcrowding and overloading, once fashionable, is condemned and discarded. Care is given to produce decorations that are beautiful and elegant rather than those which are costly and overwhelming. The crowding into a house of every description of furniture and ornament, merely because it is expensive and helps to display the wealth of the accumulator, is no longer considered to be in good taste, and the same rule regulates the display of ornaments on dinner and supper tables. Nor is it any longer considered necessary that every dinner table should be the exact counterpart of its neighbor; the individual taste of the hostess is allowed full play, and novel descriptions of decorations, provided they keep within certain broad bounds, are welcomed and approved.

The advancement of practical taste in decoration is much shown by the abandonment of many of the heavy receptacles for flowers, such as vases of three tiers, each tier crowded with costly and beautiful hothouse flowers; compound trumpet-shaped glasses of heavy outline, contrived so that the glass and foliage completely blocked the view across the table; épergnes handsome and massive in form, and filled to overflowing with rare fruits and flowers, and silver and china plaques covered with miniature tritons, camels, and other designs, handsome in themselves, but depressing to the spirits by their vastness and obliteration of everything else. These are now justly relegated to the sideboards, where their coloring and size are not out of keeping, and their places taken at the principal table with smaller and more elegant conceptions.

For flowers there are many descriptions of stands and vases—some of china, some of cut-glass, and others of looking-glass and plain glass, but all of low shapes, so as to enable the eye to look over and beyond them, and in which the flowers are arranged without crowding, each contributing to the refreshment and delight of the gazer instead of being a mere unit in a mass of hopeless and unmeaning coloring. Besides the flower vases, the table is further decorated with services of old china plates and dishes, not all matching in shape or pattern, but with a harmonizing color pervading the whole; Indian jars, very small, and quaint forms for holding single flowers; Parian and white china figures of children or Cupids either used for fruit or flowers; delicate tinted dessert dishes of various hues, queer-shaped silver or gold ladles and spoons, antique Venetian glass and its modern imitations, delicate hued and hand-embroidered napery; and many other refinements that, judiciously selected, are much more agreeable objects of contemplation than handsome dinner services and sets of silver and china ornaments in which the same design is repeated until it becomes wearisome.

With regard to the glass used about the table, the fashion of colored glass is highly to be commended, white glass, however fragile and exquisite in cutting,

failing to produce the same effect as tinted glass when artificial light is thrown upon it. The delicate hues of Salvati's modern imitation of old Venetian glass, the picturesque shapes of his wine glasses and finger glasses, and the diversities of their patterns, at once proclaim their title to be ranked among the best modern productions. The knowledge of how to combine different colors, so as to produce bright and yet harmonizing tints, seems to have been better understood by ancient

than modern glass blowers. Each color in ancient glass partakes in some measure of the hues of its neighbor. The ornaments around the glass vary in form or in color, and all combine to make an antique whole, unlike the modern style of coloring, which consists in multiplying clear and decided primary tints, with never a shade or different colored ornament between them, to help to blend and break away their crudeness and intensity. Ruskin notices this error when he remarks "that no color harmony is of high order unless involv-

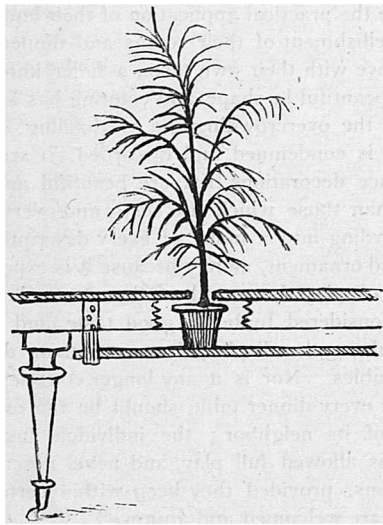


FIG. 1.—DINNER-TABLE DECORATIONS.

ing indescribable tints," while in these few words he compresses into small compass an excellent precept as a guide both in flower and other decorations, but more especially in regard to china and glass. Flowers already follow this rule, as can be verified by a careful examination of some of the brightest of them, in which, where the bright and contrasting colors meet, a third shade is introduced, a sort of neutral tint that harmonizes with both, and thus blends two crude contrasts together. Blue shades into crimson before it runs into white; scarlet is mixed with white ere it touches the yellow, and white shades into a blue purple before it approaches the scarlet.

Remembering the softening and blending thus carried on by nature will help much in the selection of colored ornaments and more particularly of colored glass. The glasses whose stems are colored with some tint not too brilliant, such as crimson or yellow green, and their bowls another harmonizing color, will be found very effective, especially when one of the colors is repeated either in the salt cellars or the specimen glasses that stand before each guest. Dark blues are not good colors for artificial light, nor is the deep green so often used for hock glasses recommended, as it is too opaque a color to reflect light, and it absorbs a great quantity while throwing a dullness and heaviness over the table if much used. Light greens of olive and yellow shades are all good. Yellow of all shades is effective, especially the bronze yellow that gives the appearance of a gold thread run through the glass. Pale sea blues are good, or any light blue that is slightly mixed with yellow, but dark blues must be avoided for the same reason as dark greens. White opaque lines upon clear glass, or pink, blue, and white lines upon the same are good, and soft shades of crimson will be found effective. Clear glass knots and twists about the colored glass will be found to help in the general harmony.

Another important point in table decoration is the color and texture of the linen used for napkins and table-cloths. The present dazzling white tablecloth is giving place to softly tinted tablecloths, as it is found that they enhance the beauty of what is laid upon them. A pale écru-colored tablecloth of coarse texture, with a bold pattern upon it, such as palm leaves or vine leaves, will throw up and improve many articles placed upon it, where a glossy and exquisitely fine white linen cloth will deaden the white of the china, take from the clearness of the white flowers, and detract from their beauty. Handsome borders and deep fringes make a good finish to all cloths, and increase their rich appearance. The napkins should match the tablecloths in color, but not in texture; they should be of the finest and softest materials. Soft colored borderings and handsome fringes to these are good, and are a re-

vival of the tastes of the Greeks and Romans, who were extremely fanciful over their napery, delighting in deep borderings and fringes, and rarely permitting two of one pattern to be used at one time. Crewel will be found useful for working borders and handsome edgings to the napkins, as the colors used will bear frequent washing.

Where the style of ornament used does not throw dark shadows beneath it, the lighting of a table should be managed from above, either by gas or wax chandeliers, or silver branches containing wax candles placed at intervals down the table; but where vases are used with three tiers, or any vases with double rows of flowers, the light must also come from the side walls of a room, so as to throw its rays obliquely upon the vases, and disperse the shadows thrown by the top tiers upon the lower ones. This lighting must not be forgotten. When arranging pot-plants, either through or upon a table, the side lights are then decidedly necessary to remove the shadows thrown by the foliage either upon the flowers beneath or upon the tablecloth.

Pot-plants are much employed to decorate tables, but they are not generally desirable as ornaments for large dinner parties when cut flowers can be had. When placed in china pots, of however beautiful a form or design, they seem to impart a heaviness to the table, particularly when many are used. The pot itself is so conspicuous that one fails to realize the beauty of the plant above it, and its thick foliage intercepts the view; besides, a plant must be exceedingly well grown to present a finished look on every side. The removal or sinking of the pot is the only way to obviate this difficulty, and to arrange the decoration as a low one, and to surround the centre flower with foliage and other plants, so as to give the appearance of its growing in a bed of ferns and flowers. The accompanying Fig. 1. shows the section of a table through which a pot-plant can be placed. The leaves of the table are withdrawn, the pot is placed in position resting upon a cross piece of wood fastened for that purpose to the under part of the table, and the leaves are then screwed back to their places, but not allowed to meet, pieces of wood being

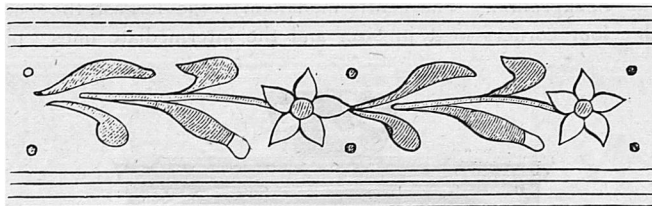


FIG. 1.—STENCILLING AND GILDING.

inserted at intervals in the space left to prevent any sudden jerk closing them, and thus injuring the stem of the plant. Another plan is to have a pine leaf made either of the size of the one whose place it takes, or smaller; in this leaf a circular hole is cut to allow of the pot being dropped through it, and a strong box is pushed underneath the table for the pot to rest upon. Several pot-plants can be arranged down the table by opening the leaves and dropping the pots through, and allowing them to rest upon some temporary erection

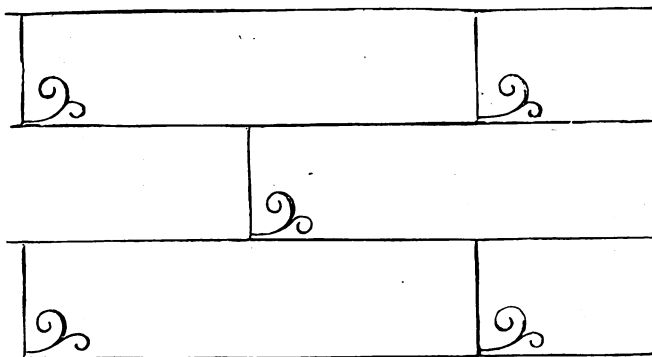


FIG. 2.—STENCILLING AND GILDING.

beneath. Small palms are the plants generally used for this kind of decoration, but unless quite young they are too large for most dinner tables, and preference should be given to smaller and flowering plants, foliage plants, and ferns.

Fig. 2 gives the appearance of one of these pot decorations. The plant is a *Dracæna magnifica*, of a deep red tint, and is surrounded by a shallow tin receptacle, filled with fern fronds and lycopodium, and a few white flowers placed among the foliage according to the

season; the larger flowers, such as camellias, roses, azaleas, being preferable to smaller varieties. The color being supplied by the pot-plant, it is only necessary to have a few handsome flowers mixed with the green at the base. When the plant itself is covered with blossom, the flowers that are arranged beneath it must contrast with it, and be largely mixed with ferns and lycopods.

The disadvantage of sinking these pots through the table is that two tablecloths are required instead of

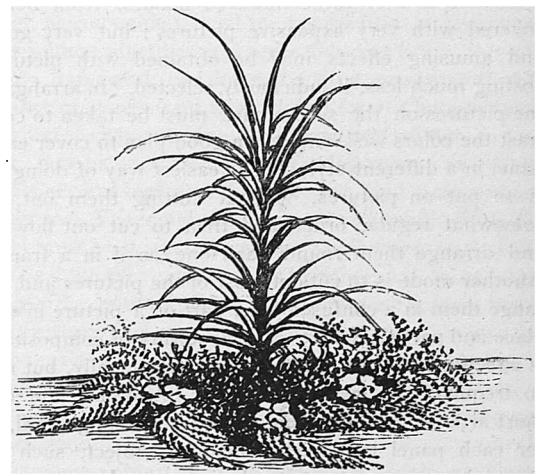


FIG. 2.—DINNER-TABLE DECORATIONS.

one. They must be laid on down the length of the table, and overlap each other about an inch, being pinned together in places where it does not show, and ironed so that the folds may lie quite flat. The places through which the plant appears must be flattened as far as possible, and a piece of tin sheeting laid over the place where the flat tin troughs for the flowers come, so that no wet and drooping leaves stain the tablecloth. Zinc would perhaps be preferable to the tin, as with it there would be no risk of iron mold if any of the water should be spilled or the troughs leak a little.

#### STENCILLING AND GILDING.

##### I.

DURING recent years the art of mural painting has been much revived, and it is likely to become important in the decorations of the future. Omitting present reference to fresco and encaustic, we will speak of the simpler art of stencilling that may be practised by an amateur, and even by people who have no knowledge of drawing. It is very inexpensive, and covers many an otherwise unsightly wall with beauty at a small cost.

The first thing to be considered is the style of building to be decorated, and the patterns that would assimilate best with its purpose. Thus a church requires set patterns, with sombre and rich coloring, while for a public hall or dwelling-house bright trailing patterns can be safely used, with gilding. For a really successful design, care must be taken that each part is in proportion, and that the colors are not in discord; and to obtain a perfect whole, no one part of the design must strike upon the eye so prominently as to engross the attention to the exclusion of the rest of the patterns, and a building painted from half a dozen patterns, well grouped and matched as to color, will look better, and be in far better taste than one crowded with a heterogeneous medley of designs.

The materials required for water-color stencilling are as follows: Colors in powder, japaners' gold-size, varnish, common size, turpentine, hog's-hair and sable brushes, square of glass, T-square, foot-rule, string and lead weight, mahlstick, earthen pots of various sizes, and gilder's cushion and knife.

Before beginning to color a wall, a builder's opinion must be taken as to whether it is dry enough to receive and retain the colors. A brick wall well covered with plaster is the best surface, and where the white of the plaster is retained as the ground color, no further preparation is needed. In all cases time must be allowed to elapse between building and decorating.

Should the pattern be for a brick or stone wall un-